

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

LEVEL
ONE

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SOUTHERN BAPTISTS TO HOLD ANNUAL MEETING IN JULY

The Japan Southern Baptist Church Federation will hold its annual meeting at Amagi San So conference site on July 27-30. About 200 are expected to attend from 57 churches. There are now 54 Japanese pastors and 104 missionaries at work in Japan under the S.B.C.F.

A delegation to Okinawa will leave in July and will return with a report on the situation there in time for the annual meeting. The delegation is composed of the Rev. W.R. Medling; the Rev. Kenji Otani; the Rev. Noboru Arase; Miss Hidachi Kesaka, secretary of the Womens Dept.

A 16 member commission to study social problems has also been organized under the chairmanship of the Rev. Buntaro Kimura. They will study such topics as MSA and Japan, Asia and Japan, the Labor Movement, Farming and Fishing Program, Women's work, Social Work, Young People, Demoralization around Military Bases, and the Problem of Baptist Church in the USSR.

WORK CAMPS FOR 1954 CALL YOUTHS TO WORK, TO WORSHIP AND TO WITNESS

Three International Work Camps, 2 High school work camps and 3 Youth Caravans will send Christian youths to spots all over Japan to work, to worship and to witness together. The International work camps will use the English language and will be held on Sado Island, where they will make cement blocks for a church and help build it; in Ajiro where the grounds will be cleared and a foundation laid for a childrens TB Sanatorium; and in Hiroshima where the grounds will be cleared and a chapel constructed for a Christian cemetery. The work camps will last from July 14 til August 11.

The High School Work Camps will last from July 28 - Aug. 11 and will consist of construction a mountain road in Gifu, and the repair of a dormitory and a playground for the children of barge operators in Yokohama.

The Youth Caravans will begin their work with a period of preparation together, after which they will work among local churches or in areas needing pioneer evangelism. The small teams will spend several days in each community to help revitalize the local church youth program, conduct evangelistic meetings, direct recreation, visit old peoples homes, and

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hospitals and help in Daily Vacation Bible Schools. They will be carried on from July 14 - Aug. 4 in Northern Kyushu, Northern Hokkaido, and Southern Hokkaido.

INTERNATIONAL WORK CAMP SCHEDULED FOR OKINAWA

The Japan NCC will send 3 representatives to the International Work Camp on Okinawa sponsored by the Okinawa Council of Churches. The Work Campers will construct a poor peoples' home during the month of August. The Japan reps are Mr. Otomo Isawa, professor's assistant at Sei Nan Gakuin; Miss Hisako Yasui, High school teacher, and Miss Sawako Kinoshita a graduate of Nippon Joshi Dai Gaku (Japan Women's College.).

LACOUR TEAM TO ARRIVE JUNE 23

The famous Lacour Musical Evangelical Band composed of Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Lacour and 22 others will arrive from the US on June 23 for a 2 month campaign in Fukushima. Their tour is being sponsored by the Japan Lacour Musical Evangelism Commission, and they will work under the auspices of the Centenary Movement Committee while here.

On June 25, they will present a musical concert at Aoyama Gakuin, and on June 26-28 will hold evangelism meetings there. Their Fukushima campaign will begin July 1. The work in Fukushima will be centered in 10 district evangelical centers, and teams will go out to the surrounding areas from these centers at the request of Japanese pastors.

TOTAL YMCA MEMBERSHIP DECLINES IN '53; NUMBER OF CHRISTIAN MEMBERS INCREASES

A sharp decline in Y membership during 1953 was indicated in a survey submitted to the National YMCA Lay Leaders Conference at Gotemba on May 22-23. This decrease in membership reflects a slight but noticeable general decline in interest in Christianity among the students as is evidenced by a decrease in the number attending church. One of the factors responsible for this is the ebbing of the tide of pro-Americanism which was no doubt a prominent factor in attracting many students to Christian organizations in the first place. Rearmament, disgust with the internal politics of a pro-American government, and a general reaction to the years of occupation are cited as some reasons for this reaction.

In the face of this, an overall increase in Christian Y members and other statistics in the survey show signs of healthy growth and indicate that at least part of the general decline may be attributed to a dropping off of "excess baggage" or those who were attracted to the Y (or the churches) mainly because of its foreign connections, rather than because of Christian principles. The statistics are as follows:

	1950	1952	1953
Membership - Men	11,574	15082	10,447
Membership - Women	3907	4764	3,492
Christian membership YMCA?	2,407	2604	2,694
Student YMCA members	2000	2258	2,220
Hi Y members	1042	4970	1381
Lay leaders	1408	1863	2055
Number secretaries	85	95	99
City YMCAS	31	34	35
Student YMCAS	65	85	87

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The Lay Leaders Conference was attended by 140 representatives of the lay leaders who cooperate with the Y secretaries in putting across the Y program. They adopted resolutions to: 1. Hold a prayer week beginning June 27; 2. Organize a group in the YMCA to study social problems; 3. Organize a National Fellowship of Lay leaders in the YMCA; 4. Hold area conferences in next fall in East, Central and West Japan.

Speakers at the conference were Dr. Emil Brunner, who spoke on "A New Program for Lay Leaders in the YMCA" and General secretary Soichi Saito, whose topic was "Democracies and the YMCA".

1953 was the fourth year in a 5 year campaign to end in 1955, which will mark the centennial of the World Alliance of YMCAs. The theme of the campaign has been to 1. Build up strong Christian personalities; 2. Build a Democratic Community; 3. Build up Democracy and peace in Japan; 4. To lay the foundations for world peace. Membership drives and building campaigns have been held during the first 4 years. A total of 9 new buildings have been constructed since the war, and 7 reconstructed. 4 Buildings have been bought, and land has been purchased for 3 others. In addition, 10 new camp sites have been started, and 13 dormitories begun for University students. 50,000,000 yen of the total cost of 210,000,000 yen has been raised in Japan.

PERSONALS

John Coventry Smith, secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA is now in Japan for a week, and will then proceed to Korea. He will stop in Japan again in July on his return from Korea.

Mr. & Mrs. Eugene E. Barnett are now in Japan on a visit to the Far East. Mr. Barnett is general secretary of the World Committee of the YMCA.

Bishop Frederick Newell of the New York Area of the Methodist church and the Methodist Commission on Overseas Relief stopped in Japan briefly en route to Korea, and spent the day visiting I.C.U. and conferring with Japanese church leaders. He will confer with Korean churchmen on rebuilding needs there, and will preach at Tokyo Chapel Center on Sunday July 4 on his way back to the US.

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD APPOINTS MISSIONARIES TO THE GIS

Rev. & Mrs. Norman E. Koehler have been appointed by the Presbyterian Church in the USA to come to Japan to give full time to working with the US military personnel around military bases. They are being supported by a special budget, and will draw their work funds from this budget. In order to determine the location for their work, a special committee of the NCC has visited various military bases around Mount Fuji and in Yokosuka. The Koehlers are expected to arrive late this summer.

